(c) if so, by what time Government would start and clomplete the construction of this bridge?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MALLIKARJUN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Survey for a rail birdge across river Ganga near Patna completed in February 1991 revealed that the cost of the work would be around Rs. 468 crores with a negative financial return. Due to constraint of resources, it has not been found feasible to take up this work for the present.

Increase in the rate of Railway sleepers

840. SHRI G. G. SWELL: Will the Minister fo RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have enhanced the rate of evergreen railway sleepers in 1987-88 by 30 per cent above the rate for 1986-87 and in the year 1988-89 by 5 per cent above the rate for 1987-88;

(b) whether it is a fact that the enhanced quantum has not been paid to the suppliers in Meghalaya;

(c) the total amount due to the suppliers on this score;

(d) the reasons for not paying them; and

(e) whether a report has been called from Government of Meghalaya which is the agency for placement of orders and disbursement?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MALLIKARJUN): (a) There was 30 per cent increase during 1987-88 over the year 1986-87. However, during the year 1988-89, there was no increase over the previous year.

(b) to (e) Railways purchased sleepers through State Forest Department. Due payment has been made to them.

Running of Ganga Cauvery Express Train

841. SHRI NARESH C. PUGLIA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Ganga Cauvery Express runs between Varanasi and Madras and *vice-versa* covering middle stations viz. Jabalpur, Itarsi, Nagpur, Chandrapur etc.;

(b) what is the total distance of this route with details of distance between each station;

(c) whether it is a fact that the distance would be short after conversion of Chandrapur—Gondia—Jabalpur-Varanasi narrow gauge into broad gauge line;

(d) if so, the extent of distance that would be short as a result of such conversion;

(e) what is the total number of trains going and coming at present from five southern States (Tamil Nadu, Pondicherry, Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh) which connect Uttar Pradesh and Bihar via Jabalpur; and

(f) what are the names of each train and what is total revenue by passenger trains and goods trains during the last three years, year-wise with revenue amount?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MALLIKARJUN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The distance between Varanasi and Madras via Jabalpur and Itarsi is 2144 kms. Inter-sectional distance is as follows:

Varanasi-Jabalpur	504 kms.
Jabalpur-Itarsi	245 kms.
Itarsi-Nagpur	298 kms.
Nagpur-Chandrapur-Balharshah	222 kms.
Balharshah-Madras	875 kms.
Total:	2144 kms.